

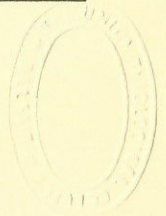
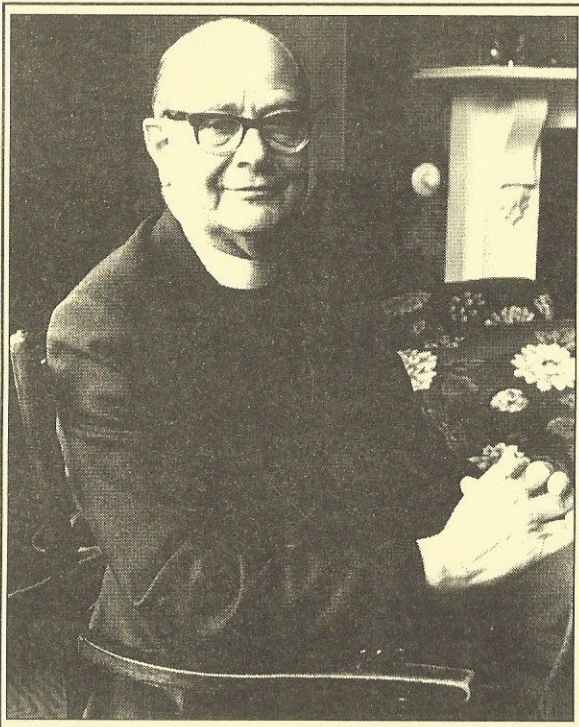
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LINK-UP

DUBLIN AND MUNSTER PRESBYTERY
Presbyterian Church in Ireland

Bulletin No. 9

June 1994



Rev. G B G McConnell MA DD

A NOTE FROM THE HONORARY EDITOR

It is no more than appropriate that we pay tribute in this issue of the bulletin to the Rev. Dr Brian McConnell, an Ulster-born minister who has the distinction of spending almost his entire ministerial career of close on forty years in the service of southern congregations. As we write Dr McConnell is celebrating his eightieth birthday. Still healthy and alert, he is a regular attender at Presbytery, Synod and Assembly, and his sensible letters on current affairs, civil as well as ecclesiastical, may still be read occasionally in the public press.

George Brian Greer McConnell was born at Markethill Manse, Co. Armagh, on 15 May 1914. His father was the Rev. William James McConnell, BA (1885-1956), and his mother was Margaret Stewart Small. Educated at Campbell College, Belfast, and Queen's University (BA), he studied for the ministry at Westminster College, Cambridge, and the Presbyterian College, Belfast (now Union Theological College). Licensed by Belfast Presbytery on 25 May 1939, he served for two years in a Belfast congregation before coming south to Abbey Presbyterian Church as assistant to the Rev. J C Breakey, afterwards DD and Moderator of the General Assembly.

He was ordained and appointed assistant to the Rev. Robert Crossett at Bray, Co. Wicklow, on 15 October 1942. We learn from the late Rev. J A Reid's short history of Bray congregation that Mr Crossett in fact obtained leave of absence in 1942 to serve as a chaplain with the British armed forces and that during his service in Western Europe Mr McConnell was in sole charge of the congregation. He remained at Bray until he received a call to Donore, where he was installed on 3 May 1945. When in 1972 Lucan was united with Donore Mr McConnell was installed at Lucan as stated supply. During his pastorate at Donore Mr McConnell received the degree of MA from Dublin University (1954) and that of DD from the Presbyterian Theological Faculty, Ireland (1975). He was Moderator of the Synod of Dublin in 1967 and was Convener of the General Assembly's National and International Problems Committee from 1953 until 1969.

It was during his short assistantship in Dublin that he met his future wife, Molly Lee, who had grown up in Abbey congregation, where she was a Sunday School teacher. They were married on 19 April 1945. Dr and Mrs McConnell, who now live in retirement at Warrenpoint, Co. Down, have two daughters.

We are privileged to be able to publish as our main article in this issue of

LINK-UP Dr McConnell's account of the congregation over which he presided for so many years and to which he gave such distinguished and devoted service.

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Our cover photograph of Dr McConnell is reproduced by courtesy of the *Presbyterian Herald*.

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DONORE CHURCH AND CONGREGATION

South Circular Road

Dublin

by

G B G McCONNELL

In the year 1861 the Presbytery of Dublin resolved to 'establish a Mission in the South Western District of Dublin in view of the large number of Scottish artisans living there'; and a licentiate of the Route Presbytery, Mr John McCurdy Hamilton, was invited to take charge of it. The world of 1861 was very different from the world of today, but it was by no means as peaceful as some might think. The Crimean War was over, but the American Civil War was raging; Garibaldi had been campaigning in Italy; Bismarck was about to begin the making of modern Germany.

In Ireland conditions were unsettled, as usual. There were evictions and agrarian troubles; and about this time the 'Society of the Fenian Brotherhood' was established to secure independence by force. The Church of Ireland was still the Established Church, and it was less than twenty years since the last legal disabilities of Presbyterians had been removed. But in Dublin Presbyterians were becoming more influential, playing their part in the professions and in business. Mr Findlater had offered to give the congregation of Mary's Abbey a new church — Rutland Square, now Abbey.

In 1862 the Presbytery obtained leave from the Assembly to erect the 'Mission Station at Belleview' into a congregation during that year should circumstances permit. And the result was that on 26 October 1862 the church at Belview was opened. The building was to accommodate three hundred persons and cost less than five hundred pounds. The opening services were conducted by Dr Kirkpatrick of the Scots Church, Capel Street (Mary's Abbey) and the Rev.

John Black of Ormond Quay. On 23 December 1862 a call was made out to Mr Hamilton and signed by twenty-four persons. By 1875 there were forty-two seatholders, but it was already becoming evident that the situation of the church was unsuitable, and it was unanimously agreed that a site should be secured at Donore, then on the outskirts of the city.

The foundation stone of the new church was laid in October 1880 by the Rev. Dr Jackson Smyth, Moderator of the General Assembly. A bottle containing copies of Dublin newspapers, a *Presbyterian Missionary Herald*, etc., were placed under the stone. We read that the event took place 'in very inclement weather'; but it is pleasing to know that those taking part repaired afterwards to luncheon in the Shelbourne Hotel.

The church and manse were built for four thousand three hundred pounds, the church being of Stepside granite, with dressings of Williamwood stone. It was planned to have a tower and a spire, but these did not materialise. The architect was William Sterling and the builder Reuben Mellon. The building at Belview was sold for five hundred and twenty-five pounds and is still in use as a canteen in Guinness's Brewery.

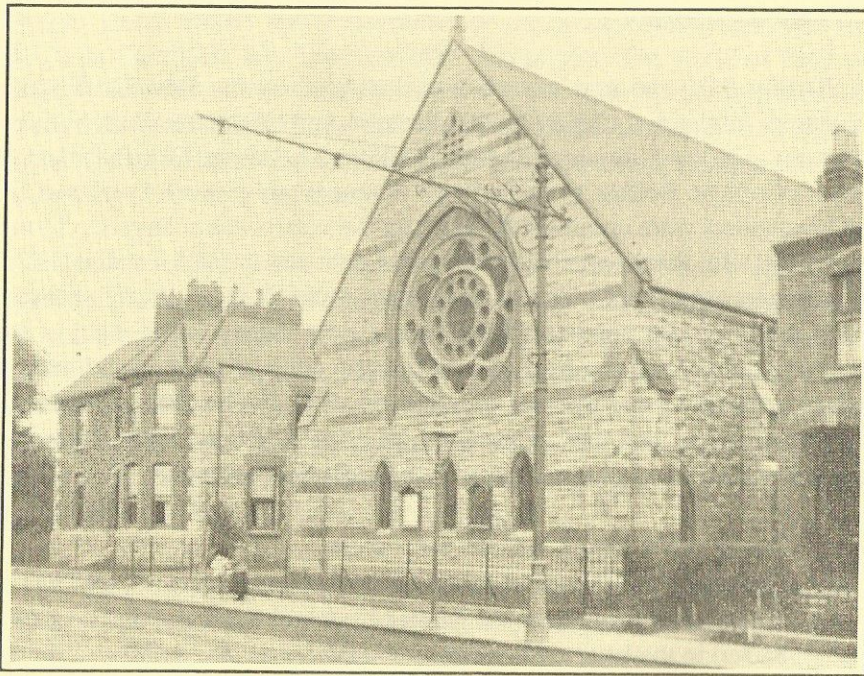
On 29 July 1881 the new church was dedicated by the Rev. Dr Fleming Stevenson, minister of Christ Church, Rathgar, and Moderator of the General Assembly. On the following Sabbath the Rev. J L Porter, DD, President of Queen's College, Belfast, preached 'two eloquent and powerful sermons'. In 1882 two elders were ordained. A year later the vestry was enlarged to form a lecture hall. But there was still a substantial debt and in 1885 a special effort was made to remove this. The 'Artistic Bazaar and Fancy Fair' (by means of which the debt was almost cleared) was a tremendous affair, held in the Rotunda Rooms for three days. All the congregations helped, each having a stall decorated in some particular architectural style. The Duchess of Abercorn was the patroness, and the bazaar was opened by Lord and Lady Brabazon. Chancellor Tisdall of Christ Church Cathedral read a prologue:

Today you'll view a brilliant fairy scene,
Graced by the charms of many a fairy queen,
While grouped around 'the maids of honour' stand,
Robed in the habit of some chosen land.

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The choir sang the anthem 'O taste and see', and there was every sort of attraction – marionettes, a ventriloquist, Christy Minstrels, and Dr Tisdall's readings from Scott and other writers. A special attraction was that the round room was to be lighted by electricity. Numerous items were raffled, including three pairs of prize pigeons. The gross takings amounted to one thousand seven hundred pounds, the net profit being almost one thousand four hundred pounds.

In 1892 a National School was built and proved a valuable asset for more than half a century. In 1902 we read that 'instruction is given in the new Classrooms in Cookery and Laundry', and later even science was taught. Mrs McAllister was the most notable of the principals who presided over the school which was attended by many children who were not Presbyterian. Eventually our own families began to move too far away into the new suburbs, and other schools were available for the non-Presbyterian children, so that the numbers began to decline. In 1949 the Department of Education refused to sanction the appointment of a new teacher and the school was closed.



DONORE CHURCH AND MANSE 1909

In 1900 Mr Hamilton, who had also been Clerk of Presbytery and who was later to become Senior Honorary Chaplain to the Lord Lieutenant, presided over the Assembly as Moderator, the meeting being held in Dublin. He received the degree of Doctor of Divinity from the Irish Theological Faculty, and in 1902 he retired from the active duties of the ministry. In the same year Mr Gordon Clements, assistant to Dr Edgar in Adelaide Road church, was called as Dr Hamilton's assistant and successor.

About this time we hear of a Guild, with a membership of sixty, having lectures, cycling expeditions and picnics to Bohernabreena and Lucan. But in 1919 the Session report that the Guild 'is not in so healthy a condition as we would wish' and by 1922 it had disappeared. Revived in 1945, it continued to flourish for many years. In 1905 another bazaar was necessary to produce a credit balance and over seven hundred and seventy six pounds was raised. A prominent member about this time was the distinguished Liberal Unionist, Sir Thomas Russell, MP, whose name was perpetuated in the Russell Hotel in St Stephen's Green.

The membership increased during the early years of the new century. The Sabbath School had more than sixty on the roll, and a Boys Brigade was started in conjunction with Adelaide Road. By 1910 there were one hundred and thirty names on the Communion Roll, although 'the attendance at the weekly prayer meeting remains discouragingly small'. About this time a pipe organ, by Benson of Manchester, was installed at a total cost of four hundred and thirty eight pounds, of which 'Mr A Carnegie' gave one hundred and ninety pounds. In 1924 the organ was completed to the original specification. (In later years Mr Percy Pringle gave long and distinguished service as honorary organist).

In 1911 the Sabbath School excursion was to Sutton. A new age was beginning, for it was Coronation Day. Before long the clouds of war would be looming up. A year later the Home Rule Bill caused Ulster Presbyterians to forget the past, align themselves with the Ascendancy and prepare to resist to the uttermost. A copy of the Ulster Covenant is to be found in the Donore box in the Bank. It is, however, unsigned!

It was during this period that a nostalgic poem about Donore was published in *Sinn Féin*:

The still canal and waving trees,
The holly bushes round the Kirk!
The sabbath morn that never flees
My mind though worldly shadows work
To wear the soul. Oh! I can still
Walk with the folk to Zion Hill

The author, Crawford Neill, was later killed in the 1916 Rising, although not, I believe, a participant in it.

In 1914 Ireland's conflict was enveloped, and temporarily stilled, by a greater. We read of Scottish soldiers from Wellington and Portobello Barracks attending morning service; of social entertainments for the troops; of work for the Red Cross and of the first Donore casualty – 'Wallace Russell has fallen on the field of battle'. Other names were soon to follow.

On a Sabbath morning in January, Dr Hamilton died and his body was buried in the cemetery of the Hibernian Military Academy in Phoenix Park, where he had been chaplain. The Kirk Session minute refers to 'his consistent Christian life, his piety, his firm and vigorous character, his integrity, and the kindness of heart which made him ever ready to serve others'.

Three new elders were ordained in 1916 – Samuel Irwin, David Weyms and JB Hamilton. The last named was already a teacher in the Sunday School. Later he was to become its superintendent, and as Session Clerk was to be for many years a central pillar of Donore. Those who knew him will be struck by the fact that the words quoted above in reference to his father could have been applied with equal truth to the son.

The end of the war brought no peace to Ireland, and 'The Trouble' had its ill effect on Donore, as elsewhere. But the congregation appears to have remained undaunted. Like Jeremiah buying the land at Anathoth during the siege of Jerusalem the Committee in 1918 bought out the ground on which our buildings stood, showing that they looked forward to the future with confidence. Nevertheless, in 1920 it was reported that the membership was adversely affected by 'removals and the prevalent unrest'; in 1921, that the 'shrinkage is not at an end'. By 1924 things were settling down again and improvement in congregational affairs became evident. The problem of the evening service was, however, already serious. 'It is not encouraging to the minister to see so many empty pews'.

In 1931 Dr Clements, who like his predecessor had been Clerk of Presbytery and a well-known figure in the Assembly, was called to Moneydig. He was succeeded by the Rev. Thomas Bole, and in 1932 we read that Mr and Mrs Bole 'have won their way into the hearts of all'. The Thirties were years of depression and of the 'Economic War' when the attempt to 'whip John Bull' (as Seán T O'Kelly put in) proved exhausting to the State. But in spite of this the numbers rose in Donore, with some seventy families and one hundred and

twenty-one names on the Communion Roll.

Then came World War II, with losses to Northern Ireland and Britain, the 'black out' and the closing of the mid-week service. In 1941 a German bomb fell nearby, and several houses including the manse were damaged. The church also suffered some damage. The Government defrayed the cost of repairs. The effect of the war years can be seen by the fact that in 1943 there were only fifty families, but week-day activity increased with the arrival of the 23rd Dublin Boy Scouts, who had formerly met in Meath Place and were now seeking a home. In October 1944 Mr Bole retired through ill-health, although he was later to renew his strength like the eagle, and with Mrs Bole travel to the other side of the world, finally retiring to Bournemouth where he died in 1962.

The Rev. G B G McConnell was installed in May 1945. During the earlier years of his ministry the membership increased. Some improvements were made to the furnishing of the church, and the hall. A new Communion Table, presented by Samuel Peters in memory of his wife, was made by one of the members, W R Kilpatrick.

In 1962 the recorded figures for the congregation show seventy families, one hundred and eighty-six persons and one hundred and twenty-one communicants. But as the years went by the Protestant population in the area declined, and the Donore members (especially those with young families) moved further out into the suburbs. Their loyalty to Donore remained unabated, but the total membership no longer increased.

On the retirement of Dr McConnell in 1981 the congregation agreed that it would be in the best interests of the Presbyterian Church and of the Kingdom of God to join forces with the nearby congregation of Adelaide Road, and the decision was made to amalgamate with that congregation. Some time after this the premises (church, manse and hall) were sold, and the proceeds were put to good use in the wider work of the Church in the area of the Dublin and Munster Presbytery.

The closing service in Donore was held on 7 June 1981, when Dr McConnell, preaching to a large congregation of members and friends from Matthew 8 v.39 and John 12 v.24, said:

Those of us who belong to Donore know well that we do not close these doors in any spirit of weakness or defeat; we are happy in the knowledge that we are still a living, vigorous congregation, with a happy and friendly atmosphere which has been noticed and remarked on by many visitors, both lay and clerical. And so we can see ourselves, not petering out, coming to an end with a whimper, so to speak; but going forward to new life, carrying with us something of the spirit of Donore.

ABBEY

Abbey Open-Church Committee wish to make it known that the church in Parnell Square, Dublin, will be open to visitors from 20 June until 10 September. The opening hours are 11.00 to 15.00 and all visitors are warmly welcome. The committee will have available some information on the history of Abbey as well as a twenty-minute audiovisual presentation on the history and life of the congregation. There will also be a Traid Éireann stall (selling Third World crafts made under fair labour conditions). No admission fee is charged.

This is the third year the church has been open to visitors and during the past two years some 4,000 to 5,000 people have visited Abbey. The committee hopes that some LINK-UP readers will call in during the summer: they will be most welcome.

Richard McMurtry

ADELAIDE ROAD DONORE

By the time this edition of LINK-UP will have been published a number of significant events will have taken place in Adelaide Road Donore.

The Rev. Uel Marrs and his wife Gill, who are PCI partners in mission with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa in Kenya, will have visited us on Sunday 5 June.

A dinner, specifically for members of the Donore congregation in honour of our senior minister, the Rev. Dr G B G McConnell, who has celebrated his eightieth birthday, will have taken place, when we hope to present Brian and Molly with a gift on behalf of ARD. An opportunity will have been given to the whole congregation to meet them after morning worship on 12 June, when a TEAR Fund lunch will have been held in aid of people in Rwanda.

The Rev. John Woodside of Kilkenny has kindly agreed to baptize Robert Timothy, the infant son of Frank and Claire Sellar and brother of Rebecca, on Sunday morning 19 June.

This year's SU Holiday Club for children of the community is called 'Body Builders' and will take place in our hall from Monday 4 to Friday 8 July. It will be run by members of the congregation and we would value prayer for

its effectiveness.

While the minister will be on holiday the Rev. Lindsay Blair, assistant in Ballygowan congregation, will be the visiting preacher. Lindsay helped for a number of years with the PCI Youth Board outreach in Clontarf.

We will be sorry to say good-bye to Chris Kennedy, who served as our church volunteer this past year, and we wish him God's blessing for his future, as we do Brian Colvin, who will be summer assistant in Portstewart congregation this June to August; Alfred Thompson, who will be part of the PCI youth trip to India in July, and Karen Milligan, who hopes to revisit Romania in September to work with children who are terminally ill.

A brochure including architect's design showing possible ways in which our present church site could be redeveloped (keeping the façade, which is listed) has just been produced. Requests for this by any potential interested parties may be directed to John Reid, c/o ARD Presbyterian Church, Adelaide Road, Dublin 2. We are excited about the rôle which we must continue to play here into the next century in a location so close to Dublin's city centre and again we value the interest and prayers of the wider church as we consider how best to plan for the future and witness to Christ's love in the place where God has put us.

Frank Sellar

AGHADA AND TRINITY CORK

Summer seems to be making a tentative appearance as I write and we are looking forward to our Summer Outreach team from 26 June to 10 July, led again by Steve Stockman. They will be running a children's club and a coffee bar and will appreciate your prayers.

Norman Waugh and I were invited in May to be part of the Presbyterian delegation to the Church of Ireland General Synod which was held in Cork for the first time. Unfortunately Norman took ill and was only able to attend the impressive opening service in St Finbarre's Cathedral. We hope he will soon regain strength.

Congratulations to Mrs Dorothy Knox who has celebrated her 95th birthday.

We are glad to welcome Billy and May Hull who have come from Dublin to live in Lapp's Court. Billy worked for many years with the Irish Mission. May is doing good work on the church flower beds and we are also grateful to Brendan Morgan for his willingness to battle with the cans and bottles that are continually dumped in the grounds.

Trinity Committee has decided that car parking in the church grounds needs to be controlled. There will still be pedestrian access to the grounds during the day and we already have been welcoming visitors from Norway and Russia, among other places. A policy of tithing income from rents and interest has been adopted, so missions and charities of our church such as the Presbyterian Orphan Society and the Nexus Project will benefit from car parking contributions!

The death has occurred of Bill MacIlwraith, who offered much architectural advice over the years to local congregations. We offer sympathy to Mark, Andrew and Karen and their families.

A pre and post Easter Bible study took place in homes of Aghada congregation, looking at aspects of Christian wholeness. I was also privileged through the Cork Bible Society to lead a similar study with some very receptive secondary RE teachers.

Revs David Range and C J Walter who are to move from the West Cork Methodist circuit to Christ Church, Limerick, in July have hosted a very interesting conference on the 'Disciple' method of bible study, which Rev. Bob Cobain and I attended. It requires a commitment of 34 weekly meetings with roughly half an hour per day of preparatory home study. That is a big time commitment but those in the Cork area who have already taken part are very enthusiastic. The approach combines both bible background with a challenge to discipleship, engaging with God's word personally and practically.

John Faris

ARKLOW AND GREYSTONES

Greeting from Co. Wicklow! Both congregations are praising God for His unfailing love, experienced in many ways but especially recently. Annie Reid, Arklow, and Douglas Calder and Ruth Brennan, Greystones, passed into the joy of our Lord. Each had made a distinctive contribution to the togetherness of our fellowship. Our prayers for their loved ones continue.

Four denominations in Arklow have made preliminary incursions into the idea of a community project. We are testing the waters at the moment and asking God to show us whether to proceed.

Our Holiday Bible Club (1-6 August) may well be extended this year to include all ages. A group from Hamilton Road congregation, Bangor, plans to join us and this will give scope for wider activities. We are excited at the prospect.

Both 'A' and 'G' have welcomed new members recently. In fact, Greystones received thirteen folk into full membership at the end of March. Each congregation has its own distinctive flavour and has a wonderful way of making visitors feel at home. If you are in our area, Arklow congregation meets on the Dublin Road at 9.30 am, while Greystones Service is at 11.30 am and, during July and August, we have a 40-minute spot at 7.30pm each Sunday. Greystones also has a Coffee Morning in the church hall, Trafalgar Road, each Wednesday (July and August) at 10.30am.

You probably know that Greystones CSSM meets from 17 to 29 July this year. This has been a very special annual event for many years. Hundreds of children and parents thoroughly enjoy this presentation of Jesus on the beach and in beauty spots round the area.

The Irish Christian Endeavour is to hold its Junior Camp in our town, with 'Coolnagreina', YWCA as its base. This will be in mid-August.

We hope you have a great summer with plenty of sunshine and with the fulness of the blessing of the Gospel of Christ.

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THANK YOU, JAMES!!

Even a glance at the issues of LINK-UP published so far will reveal something of the wealth of knowledge and breadth of interest in the treasury of our Honorary Editor's mind. For three years James Seery has portrayed an infectious enthusiasm for the Church of our ancestors and has given each Bulletin a depth and a scope far beyond the articles which congregations have supplied. The response of the readers within and beyond the Presbytery bounds is ample testimony to the quality of James's editorship.

We are extremely sorry that, due to pressure on his time, he feels he must

relinquish this post. We all want to say a heart-felt 'THANK YOU, JAMES!' We appreciate all you have put into LINK-UP in terms of material and of yourself.

James has enjoyed the full co-operation of our printers, Kingfisher Press, Greystones, for each publication. Thank you, Michael and Joan!

Jim Carson, Convener, LINK-UP Committee

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WE NEED AN EDITOR FOR

LINK-UP

CAN YOU HELP?

CLONTARF

A bring and buy sale was held in the home of Mr & Mrs Michael Brown which realised approximately the sum of £200.00 towards the cost of a new lawnmower. Many thanks to everybody who supported this cause.

The PWA visited Áras an Uachtaráin and had a very enjoyable day and they invited St Lawrence's Ladies' Club to their Carol Service.

At our Annual Carol Service, the Girls' and Boys' Brigades and the ladies from the PWA participated. The music was provided by the Steadfast Band and the tea and mince pies which the Ladies' Committee served afterwards were very much appreciated. A Thanksgiving Donation was given to St Francis Hospice. At the end of the service the secretary of the Sunday School, Mr Dick Lynn, was presented with a Bible by the Rev. James Brogan in recognition of his 45 years'

service as a Sunday School teacher.

The Outreach team, under the leadership of Des Paul and Gillian Topping, held their annual reunion over the New Year, at which approximately 70 children attended. A good time was had by all despite the cold weather.

The Centenary Year of the Girls' Brigade has now drawn to a close with the 5th Company having raised £800.00 over the year for Children's Research at Our Lady's Hospital for Sick Children in Crumlin.

It was with regret we said goodbye to May and Billy Hull who have moved to Cork to live. They were both loyal members of the congregation with Billy also being an elder.

We congratulate Dorothy Bothwell and Herbie Masterson on their marriage and wish them well in their future life together.

The PWA held a very enjoyable Irish evening in March.

The Annual General Meeting took place in April with the Rev. James Brogan taking the chair. A table quiz and a choir item from the PWA was held during the evening. The Ladies' Committee provided an excellent supper as usual.

The Boys' Brigade Display was held in March when the Inspecting Officer was Mr Gerry Ryan and the Girls' Brigade Display at the end of April with the Rev. Mr Brogan presenting the prizes.

Miss Valerie Dagg has been appointed as the new Sunday School Superintendent.

It is with regret that we record the deaths of Mr Alan Pilsworth, an elder in the congregation; Mrs Edna McKee, a former member and Mr William Sweny. We extend our sympathy to all their families.

Valerie J Dagg

DROGHEDA

Songs of Praise

All churches participated in the annual service in the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity. The centre for the act of worship was the Augustinian

Church. The attendance was not particularly good but there was a good atmosphere of co-operation. All local schools took parts of the service drawn up this year with the emphasis on Celtic spirituality.

Greenhills Ecumenical Conference 24 January 1994

The speaker this year was the Rev. Louis Hughes who spoke on New Religious Movements. There was a good deal of interest generated and an excellent discussion took place on the response to be given by the Church. There was also a short address on the work of the Inter-Church Meeting by Dr David Stevens and Professor Tom Norris.

World Day of Prayer 5 March 1994

St Peter's Church of Ireland was the chosen meeting place this year. The ladies of all churches participated and there was a good attendance.

Annual Sale

The usual fund-raising effort took place on 25 February. The various stalls were soon cleared and the excellent sum of £1,402.00 was raised.

Sunday School

After a lapse of many years a Sunday School has been restarted and while the numbers are small the enthusiasm and interest are great.

Reconciliation Concert

A concert featuring among others the Warrington Male Voice Choir was held in St Peter's Roman Catholic Church. The church was packed for the occasion and the mayor and corporation were robed and in attendance. The father of Tim Parry was present along with his wife and gave a short address. The concert was part of the special celebrations for DROGHEDA 800 which is being marked this year.

Annual General Meeting

Wednesday 20 April marked the annual consideration of the work of the congregation. Reports were presented on the various aspects of church work by

the secretary, Mr J H Miller; the treasurer, Mr W A McCullagh, and PWA by Mrs P McIlreavy. It was noted that finances had kept up fairly well in spite of a small membership.

Silver Wedding

Congratulations to Mr and Mrs Robert Jones on celebrating this particular milestone. Mrs Jones is the daughter of Mr James Miller and the late Mrs Violet Miller. The couple were married on 26 April 1969 by the Rev. W H Martin. They now reside in England and have one son Christopher.

Church Organist

Mrs Alice Ormiston was recognised for sterling service in the praise part of the service at the recent Annual General Meeting. The presentation of a table lamp from the congregation was performed by Mr J H Miller, congregational secretary. He spoke highly of Mrs Ormiston's loyalty, expertise and great contribution to the work of the church. Mrs Ormiston returned thanks and spoke of how much she enjoyed her part in worship. Mrs Ormiston's daughter Wilma who is a nurse in Dublin shared in the joy of the evening.

ERVEY

Annual General Meeting

The above meeting was held on 23 January 1994 after morning worship. The annual balance sheet was approved by those present. It was noted, with pleasure, that the freewill offerings had risen by over £800.00 in the last year. Obviously there is a desire that the funds of the church should be well supported.

Table Quiz

A table quiz was held in the Matt Talbot Hall, Kingscourt. There was a good attendance and a sum of over £700.00 was raised for repairs.

Ecumenical Service

The Community Centre, Kingscourt, was the centre for the united service for Christian Unity Week. The preacher was the Very Rev. Andrew Farrell, parish

priest, and the rector, the Venerable G Corrigan, Archdeacon of Meath, and the Rev. Charles McCurdy took part. Prayers and readings were also done by members of the constituent churches. There was a very good attendance and the offering was devoted to the Irish School of Ecumenics.

Baptism

McEnteer, Reece Christopher, son of Mr and Mrs James McEnteer, Cabra, on 23 January.

World Day of Prayer 5 March 1994

The theme for 1994 was Go, See and Act. St Columba's Church of Ireland, Kells, was the centre for this area. There was a good attendance and ladies from the various churches in the district took part.

Charles McCurdy

DÚN LAOGHAIRE

Could it be that the weather is actually beginning to change for the better? Are we to get some summer after all? As I survey the greenhouse, ponder on past losses and remember seeds which failed to germinate in early 'Spring', I cannot but be optimistic that this coming summer will be better than the last.

Our church newsletter is still the subject of much consideration. We are at present looking at the possibility of producing it in the smaller more compact A5 format. Regular features now include gardening and cookery pages, a junior section, and many and varied articles from members of the congregation (no reports of injuries from twisted arms as yet!) We have discovered many talents, from poets to budding journalists. In our last edition, two of our younger members, Lydia Brow and Andrew Kenny, set out to conduct our first interview—that of our minister, Rev. David Caskie.

On 27 February the Girl Guides (Monkstown District) had their Thinking Day Service. It was broadcast on the radio this year and was a lively and meaningful service, enjoyed by all.

April 10 saw a visit from the organist and choir of Cregagh Presbyterian Church, Belfast. Such a pleasure it was to welcome this famous choir into our midst.

On Sunday 1 May, the PWA held a Soup and Cheese Lunch and raised £606 for Christian Aid. This event took place on a Bank Holiday weekend and therefore the attendance was somewhat down on previous years. The amount raised, therefore, is a tribute to the generosity of those who supported this fund-raising occasion.

Engagements:

Douglas Nicol announced his engagement to Sarah Murray of Adelaide, S.Australia.

Andrew Allshire announced his engagement to Lisa Burns of Dún Laoghaire.

Birth:

23 December 1993: To Hilary (née MacLoughlin) and Stuart McBain, a son (Cameron Brodie), another grand-child for Tom and Eileen.

Baptisms:

Sunday 20 February 1994: Sian Monica, infant daughter of Wendy (Hall) and Steven Smith.

Sunday 27 March 1994: Samuel, infant son of Mark and Julie Hodgins.

Obituaries

9 December 1993: Miss Phyllis Gardiner, formerly of Royal Tce, Dún Laoghaire.

14 December 1993: Mr Robert William Finnegan, formerly of Blackrock.

21 December 1993: Mrs Flora Alexandra Mayrs, formerly of Blackrock.

25 February 1994: Mr Thomas Cochrane, late of Ardeeshal Lodge, Upper Glenageary Road.

New Communicants

On Palm Sunday, 27 March, the new communicants were received by the Kirk Session, and later made their profession of faith during the service.

They are:

Susan Adams, Kirstan Anderson, Emily Brow, Andrew O'Neill.

We welcome them all and hope they will have a long and happy association with this congregation.

James Malseed

FRAZER HOUSE COMMITTEE REPORT

from Mrs D Browne

It is hard for us to place ourselves in the position of women in the 1870s. Ill educated and with no training, marriage was the accepted role for them. If they needed to work some might become governesses or ladies' companions, or perhaps shop assistants, or something in the domestic line. When your employer deemed you to have outlived your usefulness, the real problems began. In the 1870s and for very long afterwards, there were no State pensions for 'Senior Citizens' and when the so-called 'Old Age' pension finally arrived it was 10/- per week at age 65; imagine, 50p between you and the workhouse!

These were the conditions in September 1871, when a conference was held in 8 Westmoreland Street, in Dublin. It was agreed at that meeting to provide a Home for Aged Presbyterian Women at 52 Marlborough Street, and there is a subscription list extant for 1872. The Home continued there until, in 1890, number 30 Blessington Street was acquired.

The following is an extract from an article in the *Presbyterian Herald* of December 1945:

This Home was founded by Miss Caroline Frazer, a member of Ormond Quay congregation, with the help of a few friends. Miss Frazer supervised the Home until her death in 1915 and thus gave 45 years of devoted service.

Obviously, in the social conditions then prevailing, there was a crying need for a Home which would cater for the needs of elderly ladies who had been deprived of their livelihood when deemed to be of no further use to their employers. Financially most of these ladies would only have whatever they had been able to save from their wages while working. For this reason the Constitution of the Home founded by Miss Frazer gave to each resident lady a bed-sitting-room with coal to heat it—this was provided free, along with 3/- per week pocket money. To be eligible for this accommodation, a lady had to be 'a widow or a single lady, over 50 years of age and a Communicant Member of the Presbyterian Church'.

In 1954, the Home, which we now like to call Frazer House, moved to 4 Vesey Place, Dún Laoghaire, where it continued until earlier this year. Had we remained there, modern fire regulations would have meant an expenditure of about £60,000 to bring the Home to an acceptable standard. This would have

denuded us of most of our capital, and so we would have been unable to carry on.

Our hope for the future would be to join with the Tritonville Close Committee in whatever scheme is decided upon for the next phase in Sandymount. Our aim would be to contribute financially to the building cost of the project and to have a portion of the building called 'The Frazer Wing', and have a continuation of the Home for Aged Presbyterian Women more in keeping with modern up-to-date trends. With State pensions and Health Care Legislation now in place, the need for the old type Frazer House is no more and indeed we thank God that this is so. However, there is great need for Homes which care for the elderly, especially for those of limited means, and we hope to honour Miss Frazer's name and memory by continuing to involve ourselves in this work.

Throughout its 122 years, our Home has been financed by the Dublin congregations and one or two others. We are very conscious of the fact that without the steady and loyal support the Home has received over all these years, there would be no Home for Aged Presbyterian Women and no need to plan for a new phase in our development. To succeed in our hopes and dreams for the future, we need your continued financial support and as always ask for your prayers that we may prove worthy successors of Caroline Frazer and all those who have continued the work she began 122 years ago.

Dorrie Browne

HOWTH AND MALAHIDE

In March/April 1894 mention was made of 'a new Congregation of Howth and Malahide' in Presbyterian circles in Dublin. The new congregation came into being officially with the installation by a commission of the Dublin Presbytery of the first minister, the Rev. James Wilson, in May with services in both Howth and Malahide districts.

The centenary year was introduced with a visit from the Moderator of the General Assembly, the Rt Rev. Dr Andrew Rodgers, who preached at a united service in Howth Church on 27 March, which was broadcast on RTÉ Radio. We were delighted to welcome Dr Rodgers and hope he enjoyed his visit.

In Malahide we were delighted to welcome nine new young communicants